

# September 2001

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FCE News

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## **10 TIPS SPELL F-O-O-D S-A-F-E-T-Y SUCCESS**

Do you know the most important thing you can do to keep from getting sick?

HINT: It only takes about 20 seconds.

HINT: Almost everyone can do it.

HINT: It's not expensive.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, the answer is "WASH YOUR HANDS."

Clean hands—and clean cooking utensils and surfaces—are your first defense against food-borne illness.

Like washing your hands, most of the things you can do to help prevent a food-borne illness are really easy. Here are 10 simple food safety tips, that together spell F-O-O-D S-A-F-E-T-Y.

(F) = Fight bacteria by washing your hands often. Wash for about 20 seconds with hot, soapy water BEFORE fixing or eating foods and AFTER using the bathroom, changing diapers, handling pets, coughing or blowing your nose.

(O) = Only thaw perishable food in the refrigerator or the microwave. Never defrost food on the kitchen counter. Cook food immediately after thawing in a microwave.

(O) = Order perishable takeout foods so they're delivered shortly before serving. Whether takeout or prepared at home, avoid letting foods such as meat, poultry, seafood, dairy products, eggs, cut and/or peeled fruits and vegetables sit at room temperature longer than two hours.

(D) = Divide leftovers into small, shallow containers for rapid cooling in the refrigerator.

(S)= Set your refrigerator to run at 40°F and your freezer at 0°F to help stop harmful bacteria from growing. Keep an appliance thermometer in your refrigerator/freezer to monitor temperatures.

(A) = Avoid cross-contamination. Wash cutting boards, knives and other utensils in the dishwasher or with hot soapy water and rinse with hot water after they come in contact with raw meat, poultry and seafood, and before using them for another item. Avoid placing cooked food on a plate that held these raw foods.

(F) = Fruits and vegetables should be thoroughly cleaned before eating. Wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly with running tap water just before eating. This includes fruits and vegetables that you peel or cut, such as melons, oranges or cucumbers. Bacteria adheres to the surface of these and can be transferred to the part you eat when it is cut or peeled.

(E) = Eat foods that you know are safe. Most of the bacteria that commonly cause food-borne illness can't be seen, smelled or tasted. When in doubt, toss it out!

(T) = Take the temperature of perishable foods such as meat, poultry and seafood to assure harmful bacteria are destroyed. Cook hamburger and other ground meats (veal, lamb, and pork) to an internal temperature of 160°F and ground poultry to 165°F. Beef, veal and lamb steaks and roasts may be cooked to 145°F for medium rare and to 160°F for medium. Whole

poultry should be cooked to 180°F as measured in the thigh; breast meat to 170°F. All cuts of pork should reach 160 °F. Thoroughly cook fish until it is opaque and flakes with a fork.

(Y) = Yolks and whites of eggs should be cooked until firm to avoid possible food-borne illness from salmonella. Store fresh eggs in their original carton and use within three weeks for best quality. Use hard-cooked eggs within one week -- do NOT return them to the egg carton for storage. Refrigerate them in a clean container.

Food Reflections  
September 2001

### **Research News—Asthma Study**

The prevalence of asthma has increased by 75 percent during the '80s and early '90s in children under the age of 5. Asthma now affects 4 million children in the United States.

To investigate the association of household allergens with asthma, researchers surveyed the parents of 8,252 children younger than 6 and found that almost 6 percent of the children had been diagnosed with asthma. Children exposed to dogs were 1.6 times more likely than others to have asthma. In addition, those exposed to cigarette smoke or the use of a gas stove or oven for heat each had a 1.8 times higher risk of being diagnosed with asthma. The researchers calculated that removing such risk factors should prevent 39 percent of asthma cases in children under 6.

**What's New.** This is one of few studies to measure the contribution of specific

residential risk factors to the development of asthma.

**Caveats.** The study relies on the parental report of asthma in their child. In addition, the results may not apply to older children who spend less time at home. Finally, the results may underestimate the role of household allergens because the researchers could not measure exposure to such other factors as dust mites, fungi and cockroaches.

**Bottom Line.** Parents of children under 6 may wish to avoid household risk factors for asthma such as dogs and other pets, cigarette smoke and the use of a gas stove or oven for heating.

**Find this Study.** March issue of Pediatrics; abstract online at <http://www.pediatrics.org/current.shtml>.

Healthy Indoor Air for  
America's Homes –  
August 2001

### **Recipe For Washing Outdoor Mildewed House Surfaces**

1 quart liquid chlorine bleach  
1/3 c. powdered laundry detergent  
2/3 c. strong household cleaner  
containing trisodium phosphate (TSP)  
3 quarts warm water

Use a plastic garden sprayer to apply the cleaning solution and a long handle brush for scrubbing. Rinse with the full force of a water stream from garden hose.

You may also just scrub mildewed surfaces with a brush and the cleaning solution. Rinse well with clean water.

If the surface needs painting, let it dry thoroughly and paint as soon as possible.

**NOTE: DO NOT MIX CHLORINE BLEACH AND AMMONIA. HARMFUL FUMES MAY RESULT.**

This solution is strong. Wear rubber gloves to prevent skin irritation and do not let it run down your arms. Rinse solution off shrubs or cover shrubs with plastic. Wear eye protection. Protect shrubs and grass by covering them with plastic sheets to avoid damage. If it gets on them, rinse well with water.

Escambia County Alabama  
Extension Office - Home  
Economic Notes - June 2001

**Beverages: A High Source of Calories in Your Diet!**

A bacon cheeseburger with French fries? Most people know these are high calorie foods. But what about the mega-size soda that so often accompanies fast food or tempts you on-the-go?

- Beverages can be a significant source of calories in our diets. Many of us do not realize that the super-sized, 64-ounce cola so popular at quick stop establishments offers about 600 calories, with no nutritional advantages. Coffee bar beverages can offer more than 350 calories. A 20-ounce bottle of fruit drink can contain 300-350 calories.

In a world where almost 60 percent of us are overweight, food and beverage choices can be made with a focus on

flavor, as well as calories and nutritional value. Most of us cannot afford to consume more than 1,600-2000 total calories per day. And that means eating and drinking "nutrient dense" calories—those that carry the vitamins, minerals, and protective phytochemicals we need for better health and lower cancer risk.

So say "small" when ordering high-calorie beverages, enjoy them only occasionally and find some alternatives that are just as satisfying. Here are some suggestions:

- **Coffee bar:** small latte with skim milk (can save more than 200 calories)
- **Juice bar:** a chilled glass of vegetable juice cocktail or fresh squeezed orange juice
- **Restaurant:** carbonated spring water with a lime twist
- **Your own kitchen:** home brewed green tea poured over ice with lemon juice, sweetened to taste
- **Don't forget water:** a tall, ice-cold glass is still the best non-calorie thirst quencher around

**Why Most Energy Bars Should NOT Go Home With Most People**

"Tastes like a candy bar!" brags the label of the Balance Gold Caramel Nut Blast energy bar. Why wouldn't it? On an ounce-for-ounce basis, this bar has more calories and fat than a Three Musketeers. Surprised? Don't be. Posing as health foods, ever more sugary, more caloric energy bars have found their way into the hands of many people who would be better served by a couple of oatmeal cookies or a small handful of nuts.

Energy bars were originally created for athletes, who need a quick source of

energy during a long run, bike ride, hike, or other endurance activity. If you work out for more than 90 minutes at a stretch, you deplete your readily available energy stores and will conk out unless you replenish them.

But marketers have sent energy bars into the main-stream. Casual gym goers now snack on Pure Protein bars to supposedly help build muscle, and executives grab a PowerBar for so called energy boost before an afternoon meeting.

The problem: Energy bars don't build muscle or boost energy more than any other food. They just supply calories. A Zone Perfect bar packs 210, while Met-Rx bars mete out up to 340 depending on the flavor – about the amount in two Hostess cupcakes (for two to three times the price). Granted, many of these bars boast extra protein; however, even Americans who eat poorly already consume more than enough protein.

***People looking for a quick, healthful snack should reach for a small container of light yogurt (140 calories), a piece of fruit (80 calories), or on ounce of pretzels (110 calories).*** Not only would any one of those be a lot cheaper than an energy bar, it would also taste considerably better.

Clay County Contact  
August-September 2001



## Easy Ways to Counteract Stress

- Exercise regularly. Physical activity is a natural stress-reliever.
- Get enough sleep. Adequate rest can help restore your energy.
- Maintain a balance in your life among work, family and time for yourself.
- Don't drink alcohol in excess or use drugs to forget your troubles. These substances can increase your stress and cause health problems.
- Learn stress-management techniques, such as deep breathing, visualization or progressive relaxation.
- Eat a well-balanced diet.
- Limit coffee and other caffeinated beverages. They can increase your blood pressure and make you feel anxious.
- Spend time with friends and family.

Vitality – July 2001



## **Gardener's Corner**

Summer is winding down and some interesting things are happening in the landscape during September. A few observations:

- Hummingbirds are traveling through our area and can be enjoyed for several weeks each fall.
- High populations of butterflies are seen at this time of year.
- The leaves of deciduous trees begin to lose chlorophyll and change color.
- Cooler nights make outdoor activities such as gardening more tolerable.
- Pines begin shedding needles toward the end of the month, yielding excellent mulch for flower and shrub beds.
- Wild flowers begin blooming in clearings and along roadsides.
- The early spring flowering shrubs (azaleas, camellias, blueberries, forsythia, etc.) are initiating flower buds for next spring.
- Pecan fruit is in the green shuck stage, and is filling the shells with kernels.
- Cool nights stop the growth and development of tropical and subtropical plants such as Pentas, coleus, caladiums and plumbago.

### **Get Ready for Winter Flowers**

Prepare beds and locate sources of cool season flowering bedding plants. Get ready to transplant by mid-October.

The following species are well adapted to our mild Gulf Coast winters, and can provide color through May: Petunia, pansy, snapdragon, delphinium, dianthus, China Doll carnation, violas and digitalis.

## **Fall Vegetable Gardening**

September is the prime month for starting a fall garden. There is still time for one last planting of a few of the warm season vegetables including green beans (bush and pole), cucumbers and summer squash.

It's also time for the first planting of beets, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, collards, endive, escarole, kale, kohlrabi, leek, lettuce, mustard, onions, parsley and radish.

### **Pest Watch**

Many landscape pests are at their highest levels at this time of year. Inspect the lawn, shrubs and flowers weekly and control insect and disease problems as needed. Watch for:

- Azalea defoliator caterpillars on azalea leaves.
- Sod webworms and armyworms in lawns.
- Lacebugs on pyracantha and azalea shrubs.
- Oleander caterpillars
- Black spot on roses.

\*Get help if unfamiliar pest problems develop. Your garden center, nursery, Extension agent or landscape maintenance professional can provide identification and control recommendations.

**Gardener's Trivia Question:** What garden insect gives birth to living young in Florida?

Answer on page 8.

Dan Mullins  
Horticulture Agent

## Recipes

### Seafood Lasagna

2 (10-oz.) pkg. frozen chopped spinach, thawed  
 1¼ lb. unpeeled small fresh shrimp  
 6 c. water  
 Vegetable cooking spray  
 ½ c. chopped onion  
 ½ c. chopped green pepper  
 2 cloves garlic, minced  
 1(8-oz.) pkg. Neufchâtel cheese  
 1(16-oz.) container 1% low-fat cottage cheese  
 ¾ c. (3 oz.) shredded reduced-fat Swiss cheese, divided  
 ¼ c. frozen egg substitute, thawed  
 2 Tbsp. skim milk  
 1½ Tbsp. chopped fresh basil  
 ¼ tsp. salt  
 ¼ tsp. pepper  
 1/3 c. all-purpose flour  
 1¾ c. skim milk  
 1/3 c. Chablis or other dry white wine  
 ½ lb. fresh lump crabmeat, drained  
 6 lasagna noodles (cooked without salt or fat)  
 ¼ c. freshly grated Parmesan cheese  
 ½ tsp. paprika  
 Cooked shrimp with tails (optional)

Drain spinach, and press dry between layers of paper towels; set aside.

Peel and devein 1¼ pounds shrimp. Bring 6 cups water to a boil; add shrimp, and cook 3 to 5 minutes or until shrimp turn pink. Drain, and set aside.

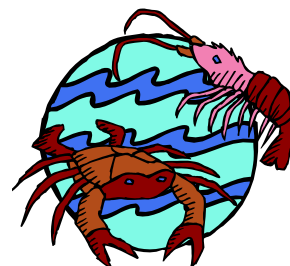
Coat a medium saucepan with cooking spray; place over medium-high heat until hot. Add onion, green pepper, and garlic; sauté until tender. Transfer to a bowl. Wipe saucepan dry with a paper towel.

Add Neufchâtel cheese to saucepan, and cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until cheese melts. Add melted Neufchâtel cheese, cottage cheese, ½ cup Swiss cheese, and next 5 ingredients to onion mixture; stir well. Set aside.

Place flour in a medium saucepan. Stir in 1¾ cups milk. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, 5 to 7 minutes or until thickened. Remove from heat; stir in 1¼ pounds cooked shrimp, wine, and crabmeat.

Coat a 13x9x2-inch baking dish with cooking spray. Place 3 lasagna noodles in bottom of dish. Top with half of cottage cheese mixture, half of spinach, and half of seafood mixture. Repeat layers with remaining noodles, cottage cheese mixture, spinach, and seafood mixture.

Combine remaining ¼ cup Swiss cheese, Parmesan cheese, and paprika; sprinkle over lasagna. Cover and bake at 350° for 40 minutes. Uncover and bake an additional 10 minutes. Let lasagna stand 10 minutes before serving. Garnish with shrimp, if desired. **YIELD:** 8 servings. *Per serving:* 355 Calories, Fat 11.7g (Saturated Fat 6.5g), Cholesterol 138mg, Sodium 750mg.



Answer to trivia question from page 6:  
***Aphids or "plant lice."***

Sincerely,

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LKB:etc

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